Memo For User Test Results: "How to Make Cheese Flan"

Introduction

The User Test for the instructional guide for "How to Make Cheese Flan" was designed to test the understandability of the instruction set, the mechanics of the language used, and the navigation of the site to see if individuals from various levels of experience could perform the recipe. My users ranged from those who were not involved in the drafting of this website to those who were new to the website. I used this range of users for testing in order to get more reliable results and analyze feedback from various viewpoints.

This testing is generally valuable because it allows us to improve the organization of the article and consolidate some aspects of it in order to make it more clear and easy to follow for the user. Specifically, any author of the site can use the feedback from the user tests in order to combine steps and take out unnecessary information that only confuses the user of the site, or to build on the site efficiently.

This research contributes to WikiHow's Knowledge Database for two reasons. The first is related to the content, as this recipe fills a request for the article being drafted. The second is related to quality and form, as it allows co-authors to contribute using consistent organization if adding to the content in this article, or to possibly other related articles that are understandable and clear.

Objectives: Test Usability on Two Levels

The User Test was designed to test the navigation of the site and see if individuals from various levels of experience could perform the recipe. To test the navigation of the site, we used an Understandability Test. We asked users to think out loud as much as possible while performing this test. This would allow us to obtain feedback in regards to the organization of the page and on the clarity of the content to the user. To test the usability of the site, we ran a performance test. The Performance Test required the user to actually make the recipe and also think aloud as much as possible while following the instructional guide. This test allowed us to obtain feedback on consolidation of certain steps and rewriting of others to have a concise and clear guide.

Method: Understandability and Full Performance Tests on Three Users with Diverse Experience

The users for these tests were those who were in no way involved with the drafting of the website and others had to have no familiarity with the WikiHow website. This way we could see if the usability and understandability of the website could have a relationship as to how familiar the user is to the website. In other words if they are not familiarized with the website, do they not understand it at all, or do they understand at the same level as familiar to the website users. For this user test I included two types of tests. The first one was an Understandability Test which, according to Anderson's Technical Communication textbook, consists of asking the readers to read the draft and ask them questions designed to determine if they understood the content of the draft. The second test used was a performance one which requires the participant to complete the whole task or a series of tasks. This

allows the observer to see where it is that the user has difficulties and where there could be some revisions made.

While drafting the procedure, or script, for my test my main focus was to see where I could make some corrections to help the reader understand it better. I required my users to think aloud during the whole process just so that I could get as much feedback as possible in regards to the organization of my draft and clarity of it. As I began my script I made sure that users knew that they could be as honest as they wished since they were not going to hurt my feelings in anyway about my draft. On the contrary they were going to give me the best feedback on my draft because I would see what people really thought about my draft before making it official to the rest of the world. After giving my users an introduction of what this user tests was about and what it required the users to do, I asked each one of them a set of Initial Questions to see how much time they cooked or baked. How often they used a cooking website or show and if they had used the WikiHow page before. This was to see how familiar the individuals were with this practice and the article website. Once this was completed, I had the users perform the understandability test which required locating various sections of the article to see how easy it was to actually locate them for use. Also, it required users to summarize specific steps in order to see if they were clear enough to them while getting straight to the point. The user later had to complete the Performance test which required each individual to make the whole recipe using the instructional guide. This was used to gather information about the steps' clarity and obtain feedback from the users as to what steps could get consolidated and even deleted. As users thought aloud, I was able to write down notes to myself of things I could change to improve the draft of my article. At the end, I included a set of general Interview open-ended questions to get more suggestions for the page. Finally, I had a scale to see how interested the users were in using this website after this experience.

This method was designed to produce reliable results. Not only it tested users from different familiarity backgrounds, but it also included two types of test which makes the results more realistic and with better results. From three levels of experience, I was able to acquire feedback from different perspectives and have a sense of a bigger sample of the population that could be using my draft.

Results and Discussion: Creativity and Organizational Feedback

A significant finding from my user test was that as my users performed the recipe, they saw steps that could be combined as one and create less confusion. This impacted my WikiHow design by just combining the steps that required consolidation and having less steps for the user to get lost though while performing the whole task. I saw that some users would say "These steps could be together" or "Why do we separate the yolks from the whites if at the end they will get combined". This made me think to myself that some of these steps could be in one step and reduce the amount of steps to follow and actually create less mess for the individual following the guide. You can see the results in the following image.

Image of Performance Test Artifact (User 1)

Observation Sheet for User Tests — Understandibility — Performance

Problem (What problem did the reader have?)	Interpretation (What might have caused the difficulty?)	Solution (What might prevent this difficulty?)
She couldn't use measurements w/out making herself pause + assimilate it.	She is not used to them.	She has to use them more.
Doing steps of separating yolks from whites.	Too much to do, adds more mess. Causes chaos	Keep whole egg together.
Doing mix into equipment measures	Too much +more mess. Causes chaos.	Combine things together. (Steps).

Image of Understandability Test Artifact (User 2)

Tori

Observation Sheet for User Tests

Understandability   Performance

Problem (What problem did the reader have?)	Interpretation (What might have caused the difficulty?)	Solution (What might prevent this difficulty?)
Reading the intro was tedious.	It is too long and technical.	Take out unnecessary sentences.
*Overall Tori gave me suggestions in bettering the instructions.		
*Combine steps. * take out quantities of ingredients from a step.		

Conclusion: Major Revisions Required

This test was significant because it collected valuable feedback that helped in the editing of the instructional guide draft. I was able to see where I could consolidate steps in order to make it clearer and less confusing for my readers. This matters because my instructor is able to see that I can make the necessary changes to my draft and improve it to a more professional format. The WikiHow users and co-collaborators can use this information gathered in order to create more concise documents and to even contribute to any other articles in a professional manner. This will allow other contributors to catch any other issues on other documents and help other format them so that the article are user friendly and clear to understand and follow.